

## CLAIMS

1. A method for improving the composition of the intestinal flora of a bird or a mammal, comprising administering, to said bird or said mammal, a food in which one or more sphingolipids chosen from the group consisting of phytosphingosine, sphingosine, lysosphingomyelin and sphinganine, or a precursor, a derivative, or suitable salt thereof are overabundant.  
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2. A method according to claim 1, wherein said one or more sphingolipids are present in said food in an amount of 0.05 to 50 wt.%.
3. A method according to claim 1, wherein said sphingolipid is present in said food in an amount of 1 to 10 wt.%.
- 10 4. A method for improving the composition of the intestinal flora of a bird or a mammal, comprising administering, to said bird or said mammal, of a pharmaceutical preparation comprising a sphingolipid chosen from the group consisting of phytosphingosine, sphingosine, lysosphingomyelin and sphinganine, or a precursor, a derivative, or suitable salt thereof, and one or  
15 more excipients.
5. A method according to any one of claims 1-4, wherein said sphingolipid is phytosphingosine.
6. A food in which one or more sphingolipids chosen from the group consisting of phytosphingosine, sphingosine, lysosphingomyelin and  
20 sphinganine, or a precursor, a derivative, or suitable salt thereof are overabundant.
7. A food according to claim 6, in which said one or more sphingolipids are present in an amount from 0.05 to 50 wt.%.
8. A food according to claim 6 or 7, wherein said sphingolipid is  
25 phytosphingosine.
9. An animal feed comprising a food according to any one of claims 6-8.

10. Use of a sphingolipid chosen from the group consisting of phytosphingosine, sphingosine, lysosphingomyelin and sphinganine for the preparation of a medicine for the improvement of the composition of the intestinal flora.

5 11. Use according to claim 10, wherein said sphingolipid is phytosphingosine.

12. A method for the preparation of a food according to any one of claims 6-8, comprising incorporating said sphingolipid, or a derivative, or suitable salt thereof in a food in a content of 0.05 to 50 wt.%.